



# CCM Testimony

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## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 15, 2023

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 168 towns and cities.

### **HB 6884      An Act Concerning The Recruitment, Retention And Enhancement Of The Teaching Profession**

The bill's intent is to promote greater recruitment and retention of teachers throughout Connecticut by, modifying among other things, the teacher certification process, tenure process and dismissal of a teacher, play-based learning, State Board of Education, duty-free period for teachers and the establishment of a task force to review teachers' retirement.

CCM understands the complexities of recruiting and retaining teachers in Connecticut. We recognize that the problems are complex in nature and varied in scope. To that end, we understand and appreciate the need for a comprehensive solution and a holistic approach. Included in the bill are several reasonable proposals, however, CCM does have questions/concerns with some provisions including:

Section 13: Which would require 30 minutes of uninterrupted duty-free period for lesson preparation. The language is somewhat ambiguous as to whether this is a daily, weekly or over the course of semester. While time for lesson preparation is necessary, this is often a matter of collective bargaining. If this duty-free period is daily, that will require additional staff needed to ensure adequate supervision and teaching for our students. Another solution is to have teacher's prepare their lessons duty-free for 30 minutes after the school day has concluded for students.

Section 19: Which would create a task force to review the financing of the teachers' retirement system (TRS). While CCM is generally not opposed to any task force, there is a concern that this may be the proverbial "camel's nose under the tent" as to requiring towns and cities to absorb a portion of the normal costs associated with TRS.

In recent years, there have been proposals to require municipalities to absorb the cost of TRS. Those proposals would have represented one of the largest property tax increases in modern history, as it would shift a combined \$73 million dollars directly on to Connecticut property tax payers.

We ask that in reviewing this proposal the Committee thoroughly consider whether it is in the best interest of the State to enact such a large local property tax increase and extensively examine the impact that it will have on local economies and communities.

If a task force is created to examine municipalities contributing to TRS, CCM believes that it should include conversations to allow general municipal government with direct access and the ability to participate in collective bargaining pertaining to teacher compensation. Currently, municipalities are not represented or under-represented in the process and we believe that direct involvement is critical to ensure adequate containment of cost in the out years.

CCM urges the committee to take the above-mentioned factors into consideration before acting on HB 6884.

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If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Chief Strategy Officer of CCM at [mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org](mailto:mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org) or 203-500-7556.